

# Chicopee Register

COMMUNITY

## Childcare prioritized by American Families Plan



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTO  
Surrounded by elected officials, childcare workers and children, U.S. Sen. Ed Markey celebrates President Joe Biden's announcement of the American Families Plan.

**By Dalton Zbierski**  
*Editor*

CHICOPEE – A cast of elected officials arrived on Montgomery Street last Friday to visit with children at the Valley Opportunity Council's Early Education and Care Center.

The May 7 gathering featured U.S. Sen. Ed Markey, MA Sen. Eric Lesser and Chicopee Mayor John Vieau. All in attendance celebrated the American Families Plan, which was announced by President Joe Biden on April 28.

"The American Family Plan; another [\$1.8] trillion so that we vastly expand family-leave policies [and] childcare policies in our country so that we see families as part of the infrastructure of our country. We have to do everything we can to ensure that they can fully contribute to our great country and economy," said Markey.

If passed, the legislation will represent an investment in children and families throughout the country. The plan is the third part of Biden's Build

Back Better Initiative; \$225 billion would be allotted to support of low and middle class families.

"We have to take this as a challenge; as our FDR moment like it's 1933," said Markey.

Despite receiving \$15 million in COVID-19 relief money since the onset of the pandemic, VOC Executive Director Stephen Huntley noted that the Community Action Agency is losing approximately \$60,000 a month, as it stays open.

Huntley believes that funding from the American Family Plan will allow the VOC to continue pursuing its mission of serving residents throughout western Massachusetts. Huntley identified that early childhood educators, and the services they provide, are essential to the communities well-being.

"They have been true heroes through all of this. We learned very early on [in the pandemic] that the economy without quality childcare openings is not an economy."

See **CHILDCARE** page 5

COMMUNITY

## Vaccinations encouraged

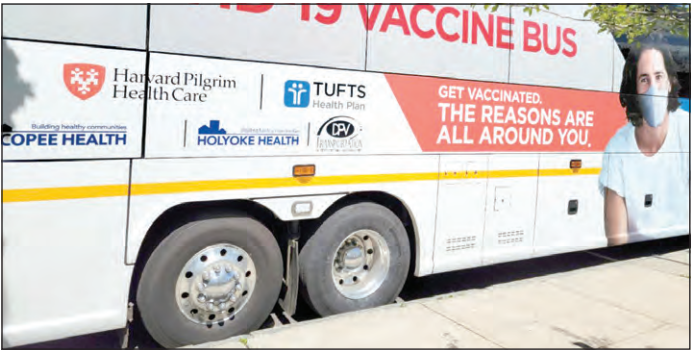


PHOTO SUBMITTED BY CHICOPEE MAYOR'S OFFICE  
Chicopee has partnered with Holyoke Health Center, Tufts and Harvard Pilgrim Health to launch the Mobile Vaccine Clinic.

**By Dalton Zbierski**  
*Editor*

CHICOPEE – Municipal officials are encouraging Chicopee residents to get vaccinated, and Mayor John Vieau is leading the charge.

"Vaccines are everywhere; they're available. We're trying to encourage people to get it," said Vieau on May 7. "I think people really need to do their part. We're in this together. Please, this isn't the flu. It's much more aggressive than the flu could ever be."

Vieau acknowledged that a small contingent of people still consider the pandemic to be a "hoax."

Vieau said that families,

who have been impacted by the novel coronavirus, can attest that COVID-19 is "no joke."

On May 12, there were 100 active cases of COVID-19 in Chicopee. That day, it was reported that an accumulative total of 4,387 Chicopee residents have experienced COVID-19 since the beginning of 2020; 4,141 have recovered, while 26 individuals passed away.

Vieau worries that not enough residents are vaccinated. On May 12, he estimated that 22,000 residents had received one dose of the vaccine and approximately 14,000 res-

See **VACCINATIONS** page 8

COMMUNITY

## Max the Cat is back



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY BOB PANDOLI  
Maxwell Edison was rescued by Bob Pandoli more than 15 months ago; he quickly became the coolest cat in the city.

**By Dalton Zbierski**  
*Editor*

CHICOPEE – On Feb. 1, 2020, Chicopee resident Bob Pandoli made a decision that would forever alter his life. It was that day that he opened his residence to Maxwell Edison, a feral cat, who was struggling to survive a bitter winter.

More than 15 months later, Maxwell remains alive and well, under the care of Pandoli. Thousands of residents have shared in the adventure. A Facebook page titled "The Journey of Maxwell Edison" has well over 1,000 followers.

For Pandoli, taking in Maxwell has been one of the

most rewarding choices he's ever made. He recently spoke to the Chicopee Register, making it known that Maxwell is thriving in his new home.

"Maxwell is doing great. In fact, in the last couple of months, it seems like he's opened up tremendously. He's really doing well," said Pandoli.

Once skittish, Maxwell is now friendly. An animal that was once on his own, Maxwell has found companionship.

"He's more like a dog than a cat," said Pandoli. "I've had pets all my life. When I was a kid, we always had

See **MAX** page 8



COMMUNITY

## Resolving Szot Park's geese problem

See Page 2



COMMUNITY

## Florence Bank opens new Chicopee branch

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SPORTS

## Colts hold off comeback attempt by Orioles

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# Resolving Szot Park's geese problem



TURLEY PUBLICATIONS STAFF PHOTOS BY DALTON ZBIERSKI  
For years, Szot Park has suffered from a geese problem, but work to remove Upper and Lower Bemis Pond Dam should expel much of the geese population from the property.

By Dalton Zbierski  
Editor

CHICOPEE – The geese problem that has plagued Szot Park off of Front Street for years is in line to be resolved, as the campaign to restore Abbey Brook and remove Upper and Lower Bemis Pond Dam advances.

On May 4, the Chicopee City Council approved Mayor John Vieau's motion to accept an amendment to the Nonpoint Source Grant that the city received from the MA Department of Environmental Protection during Fiscal Year 2019.

The amendment will bring the new grant total to \$322,000, adding to \$200,000 to the original allotment. Lee Pouliot, Director of Planning & Development, elaborated on the significance of

the funding.

"This money will focus on storm water quality improvements that are part of the project. It will primarily deal with runoff water from the park that is entering the future, restored brook that is part of the project, as we start to remove the dams," said Pouliot, who credited Associate Planner Nathan Moreau for helping to land the grant.

Phase I of the three-part project includes the removal of Lower Bemis Dam in Szot Park, subsequently eliminating Lower Bemis Pond.

The MA Office for Dam Safety mandated that Chicopee take action after designating Lower Bemis Pond Dam as a high-hazard dam that is in poor quality. It was determined that the cost of removing the dam mirrored the cost of fixing it.



Associate Planner Nathan Moreau, shown here speaking at a press conference at Szot Park last month, helped the city land a Nonpoint Source Grant from the EPA.

The first phase will cost approximately \$2 million, and removal of the lower dam will have immediate benefits, as Abbey Brook is restored. Eliminating the stagnant water that filled Lower Bemis Pond could eliminate the presence of geese in the park.

"We need to deal with the goose issue in restoring the stream," said Pouliot. "The geese issue is a significant water quality problem for us, particularly with E. coli counts in the brook and in the Chicopee River. Eliminating that problem improves our downstream water quality going all the way to the Connecticut River."

In the space that Lower Bemis Pond currently occupies, the city will implement passive recreation space, while allowing natural vegetation to reclaim much of the area, driving away the geese

population.

Councilor-at-Large James Tillitson joked that he will miss ice skating on Lower Bemis Pond. Pouliot said that he is working with Parks & Recreation Superintendent Benjamin Strepka to identify an alternative site in the park that will enable ice skating next winter.

When the Abbey Brook restoration project is completed, the Upper and Lower Bemis Pond Dams will have been removed, and the Front Street Culvert will be replaced.

Abbey Brook rises in Springfield, in proximity to Szot Park, and covers approximately a mile-and-a-half. It flows through a small culvert underneath Front Street and into a tunnel constructed be-

See **GEESE** page 4

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# May Institute sets sights on Chicopee

By Dalton Zbierski  
Editor

CHICOPEE – The May Institute, a West Springfield school for individuals with developmental disabilities, may soon branch into the city of Chicopee. Educators, employed by the institute, appeared before the Chicopee School Committee on May 5 to seek the board’s blessing.

“We are looking to expand the program into a location in Chicopee. We’ve found an ideal location and are in the process of securing the lease with that property. We would hope to move sometime late this year or early next year,” said Pamela Raymond, Sr. VP of Educational Services at the May Institute.

The school currently services students aged three to 22-years-old. Forty-eight students, hailing from both Connecticut and Massachusetts, are enrolled in programs at the May Institute, located on 111 Elm St. in West Springfield.

One Chicopee student currently attends the May Institute, which offers a

year-round curriculum.

The school is operational 222 days each year, for six hours a day. Branching into Chicopee would enable the institute to double in size.

“This new program would serve at least 48 students,” said Raymond. “It’s a large building so it would double what we have currently in West Springfield, and, possibly, a couple classrooms more.”

Erica Kearney, Executive Director of the May Institute, presented to the School Committee on May 11. She clarified that a teacher and behavioral specialist are present in every class at the school, allowing the institution to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students.

“The primary focus of our school is students with developmental disabilities and autism. We also have a range of students with down syndrome, cerebral palsy and fragile x [syndrome],” said Kearney.

A student will be taken out of a public school and enrolled at the May Institute if the public school’s Individualized

Education Program team, the school district and his or her parents determine that the student is unable to learn effectively in his or her current placement.

“At that time, the school district, the IEP team, the parents and all parties involved send a referral out to a program like ours,” said Kearney. “Our program would receive the referral, review the files, we do a screening process, interview the families, gather additional information and, then, we review to see if we have any openings within our program at that time.”

The curriculum at the May Institute is extremely individualized, based off of what a student and his or her family need. When a student reaches age 22, the institute works alongside the Department of Developmental Services to best ensure that the transition into young adulthood occurs seamlessly.

“If we’ve had them up until 22, we don’t want to see all that hard work go to the wayside either. It’s really important to see that our students continue to have a

future beyond their years at our program,” said Kearney.

It is not uncommon for students enrolled at the institute to eventually return to a public school setting. The decision is made only after it is determined that the student has developed the skills necessary to succeed in a public school setting.

Prior to a student’s return to a public school, the May Institute provides additional information to receiving teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators and continues its hands-on approach.

“When we’ve transitioned students back to public school, we actually have assisted in the public school with that transition so that generalization occurs from our program to that new school setting,” said Kearney.

In an upcoming meeting, the School Committee will vote to approve or deny the May Institute’s request to enter Chicopee.

*Dalton Zbierski is an Editor and can be reached at dzbierski@turley.com.*

## Dalton’s Introduction

Hello Chicopee, I hope everyone is well and staying healthy.

My name is Dalton Zbierski and, beginning with this edition, I am embarking on a new adventure, as Editor of the Chicopee Register.

As a Staff Writer for Turley Publications, I’ve had the privilege of covering Chicopee since the summer of 2018 and know that there is so much more to learn.

To the residents and readers, I’m excited to strengthen the relationships I’ve formed and am eager to make new acquaintances.

Please do not hesitate to reach out via email at dzbierski@turley.com.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Dalton Zbierski, 26, from Stafford Springs, Conn., is beginning this week as Editor of the Chicopee Register.

## Flagging of Veterans Graves in Chicopee



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JESUS M. PEREIRA

### Memorial Day Grave Flagging Schedule

CHICOPEE – Please join us in a time-honored tradition in paying respect to those who have served. Please wear

masks.

Calvary/Elmwood 2140 Northampton Street May 24th, 3-5p.m. [Rain Date May 25th Forestdale 304 Cabot Street May 28th, 4p.m.]

St. Jerome 125 St Jerome Ave May 22nd, 10 a.m.

## Girl Scouts schedule free ‘Intro to Outdoor Skills’ event at Moose Lodge

CHICOPEE – Next Saturday, Girl Scouts of Central & Western Massachusetts will offer a free “Intro to Outdoor Skills” program for Chicopee girls currently in Kindergarten, first-grade or second-grade, who are not yet Girl Scout members. The event will occur on Sat., May 22, from 11 a.m. until noon at the Chicopee Moose Lodge, located in Chicopee at 244 Fuller Rd.


Girls will earn their first Girl Scout patch while learning ba-

sic hiking and trail safety skills. A guardian will be permitted to attend with each attendee.

Space is limited. All COVID safety precautions will be followed. This is an outdoor event, dress accordingly.

RSVP and register at <https://bit.ly/GSoutdoorskills>.

For more information contact GSCWM Recruitment Manager Tammy Gilpatrick at [tgilpatrick@gscwm.org](mailto:tgilpatrick@gscwm.org) or 508-749-3639.



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# Florence Bank opens new Chicopee branch

CHICOPEE – Florence Bank celebrated the opening of its third Hampden County branch on May 5 with a ribbon cutting highlighted by the presentation of a \$5,000 donation to the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee.

In attendance at the socially distanced event were Chicopee Mayor John L. Vieau, Florence Bank President and CEO Kevin R. Day, Branch Manager Kimberly Downing, community leaders, and bank employees, board members and corporators.

Day was proud to present the monetary gift to the Boys & Girls Club.

“We are a local bank that is managed and staffed by people who live in the local communities we serve,” Day said. “We are part of a team of customers and employees who work together for the common goal of improving our local communities.”

The new branch at 705 Memorial Dr. is the third Florence Bank location in Hampden County to open since 2017. Approximately 1,000 of Florence Bank’s 5,000 Hampden County customers live in Chicopee. After noting that today’s technology has made online banking easier and more accessible, Day said Florence Bank built a new branch as a resource for those bank customers.

“We believe a physical location demonstrates our commitment to the fi-



A May 5 ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated the opening of Florence Bank at 705 Memorial Dr.

ancial well-being of this community and its people,” he said. “Our staff is physically here to help our neighbors with their financial needs.”

The Chicopee branch has an open floor plan with two teller pods and innova-

tive technology for quick cash handling. The location will also feature a drive-up ATM with SMART technology for easy depositing.

Kimberly Downing of Wilbraham, assistant vice president / branch manag-

er for the new location, was also present, along with other branch employees.

“We’re thrilled to be here in Chicopee, and we look forward to becoming part of the fabric of the city,” Downing told the crowd.



[L to R] Florence Bank Branch Manager Kimberly Downing, Florence Bank President and CEO Kevin R. Day and Chicopee Mayor John Vieau prepare to cut the ribbon outside of the bank’s newest branch on Memorial Drive.




PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY FLORENCE BANK  
Chicopee Mayor bumps fists with Florence Bank President and CEO Kevin R. Day during the May 5 opening of the bank’s branch location on Memorial Drive.




Lynn Morrisette, Marketing & Development Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee, stands beside Florence Bank President and CEO Kevin R. Day, after the bank presented the club with a \$5,000 check.

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## Parks & Rec to host multiple classes

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Parks & Recreation Department will offer residents multiple classes next month.

**First Aid program**

A certification class in First Aid/cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator will occur on Sat., June 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Chicopee Parks & Recreation Department at 687 Front St.

The cost for the full class is \$75 for residents and \$80 for non-residents. These are basic certifications and do not apply for daycare providers, lifeguards and nurses. Participants are invited to bring a snack.

Class space is limited! To register go to [www.chicopeerec.com](http://www.chicopeerec.com) Deadline to sign up is Wednesday June 2.

**Yoga in the Park Classes**

The Parks & Recreation Department

will also make yoga classes available on Tuesdays from 6-7 p.m. and on Saturday mornings from 10:15-11:15 a.m. The slate of Tuesday classes will run from June 1 until June 29, while the Saturday classes will begin on June 5 and end on July 10; there will be no class on June 18.

The classes are designed to teach calming techniques, including breathing, gentle flowing movements and basic balancing postures that work for all skill levels. Masks must be worn entering and exiting the program but not during the class.

Please bring your own yoga matt and any props you wish to use, as they cannot be provided under current COVID-19 regulations.

The cost for either yoga session is \$65/Residents \$75/Non-Residents. Class space is limited so register now! To register go to [www.chicopeerec.com](http://www.chicopeerec.com).

### GEESE from page 2

neath the Chicopee Electric Light Department before reaching the Chicopee River. The city of Chicopee is collaborating on the project with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the MA Division of Ecological Restoration, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation

and the EPA.

After the project’s first phase is finished, the second phase will involve the replacement of the Front Street culvert. The final phase will feature the removal of Upper Bemis Pond Dam and the further restoration of Abbey Brook.

Dalton Zbierski is an Editor and can be reached at [dzbierski@turley.com](mailto:dzbierski@turley.com).



St. Stanislaus School to host drive-through barbeque

CHICOPEE – St. Stanislaus School will be having Sister Ceil’s Family Drive-through Chicken Barbeque on Sunday, May 16th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The dinner consists of the following: ½ chicken, butter & salt potatoes, coleslaw, and a roll. Tickets are \$12 each and can be

purchased by calling the school office at 413-592-5135. There will also be cookies for sale: ½ dz. For \$ 3.00 and 1 dz. For \$ 5.00. Proceeds will benefit the school education fund. Drive through and pick-up at St. Stanislaus School, 534 Front St., Chicopee.

Chicopee residents among HCC 2020-2021 Phi Theta Kappa inductees

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is proud to announce that 75 HCC students have been accepted for membership into the Alpha Xi Omega chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa national honor society for the 2020-2021 academic year. Students are invited to join Phi Theta Kappa when they have completed 15 college credits while maintaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Six Chicopee residents were named as inductees, including Fall 2020 inductees Eduardo Lima, Michael Patnaude and Annalisa Rizzo, as well as Spring 2021 inductees Tamika Ortiz Acosta, Caitlyn Black and Sarah Tessicini. HCC’s Spring 2021 inductees will be recognized in a virtual ceremony on Thurs., May 13, 2021.

CHILD CARE from page 1

Really, the economy shut down. We, as a sector, reopened last July, and it’s no secret; you could start to see the economy coming back,” said Huntley. Lesser, a father to three young children, understands the importance of early childhood care centers.



As Chicopee Mayor John Vieau and Valley Opportunity Council Executive Director speak behind him, U.S. Sen. Ed Markey displays a drawing given to him by a group of children at the VOC’s Early Education and Care Center on May 7.



[L to R] Chicopee Mayor John Vieau closely listens to the words of U.S. Ed Markey at the Valley Opportunity Council Early Education and Care Center on May 7.

Lesser said that the state was in a childcare crisis long before the pandemic. He feels strongly that the workforce cannot fully rebound until childcare services are made available for children throughout the Commonwealth. “It’s too expensive for families,” said Lesser. “Families really struggle to pay for childcare and pay for early education. We need to shift the mindset in this country. K-12 is publicly provided; I feel strongly we have to make that universal down to age three or even earlier.” Lesser said that it’s been proven that children aged two, three or four-years-



U.S. Sen. Ed Markey reads a story to children at the Valley Opportunity Council Early Education and Care Center last Friday. Childcare 4



U.S. Sen. Ed Markey reads a story to children at the Valley Opportunity Council Early Education and Care Center last Friday, as MA Sen. Eric Lesser (left) and Chicopee Mayor John Vieau (right) follow along.

COA programs preview

CHICOPEE – Next week, the Chicopee Council on Aging is offering seniors access to numerous virtual programs, presentations and workshops. Each program will be launched on Zoom.

Online Safety Zoom Workshop

On Tuesday, May 18, at 11a.m., the COA will host the Zoom workshop “Online Safety.”

As part of the program, Robin Putnam of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation will highlight a variety of techniques that residents can use to practice online safety. Putnam will also elaborate on the function of her office. To register, please call 534-3698 or go to RiverMills Centers Facebook Page for the registration link.

Physical Activity Presentation

On Wednesday, May 19, at 11a.m., the COA will host the Zoom presentation “Physical Activity, the Key to Living Well.”

Led by representatives from Ascendria Care Alliance, the program will offer tips on the amount of physical exercise that is needed each day and ways to include physical exercise in your daily routine. You must register via Zoom using the registration link provided on RiverMills Centers Facebook Page or by calling 534-3698.

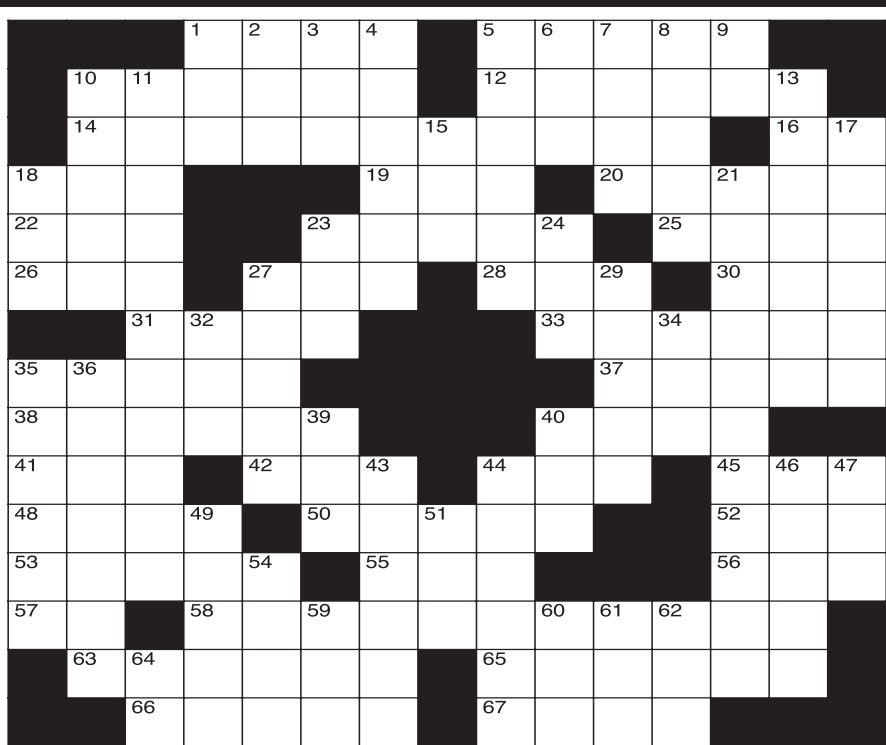
Buried Treasure program

On Wednesday, May 20, at 11a.m., the COA will use Zoom to host the “Buried Treasure Group at RiverMills Center.”

The workshop, sponsored by the MA Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, will cover a range of topics pertaining to elder law. The workshop will be led by Attorney Hyman Darling of Bacon Wilson P.C. Pre-registration is required; one can register in advance by calling 534-3698 or by using the Zoom link on RiverMills Center’s Facebook page.

old, who receive quality educational access, go on to “do better” in school, in life and in the job market. “We know it pays for itself many times over in the future,” said Lesser. Moving forward, Lesser would like to see early childhood care professionals receive similar salaries to public school teachers. He believes that they are drastically undercompensated. “Historically, it’s, unfortunately, been an unsung workforce. I think our early educators are heroes, but they’re underpaid. Historically, they’ve suffered

from a lot of job insecurity and very insufficient benefits,” said Lesser. Federal funding is key to making early education more equitable for low and middle class families. On Capitol Hill, Markey will continue to fight for the underdogs; families of young children, who are in dire need of assistance. “So many families have been under stress now for more than a year. It’s time to ask our country what it can do for you and your family,” said Markey. Dalton Zbierski is an Editor who can be reached at dzbierski@turley.com.



- CLUES ACROSS**

  - 1. Large, flightless birds
  - 5. Lifts and moves heavy objects
  - 10. Hyundai sedan
  - 12. Wear away by erosion
  - 14. Arranged alphabetically
  - 16. Top prosecutor
  - 18. \_\_\_-de-sac: Short dead-end street
  - 19. Digital audiotape
  - 20. Linguistics pioneer
  - 22. Singer DiFranco
  - 23. Arms of the sea
  - 25. Near-reach weapon (abbr.)
  - 26. Ballplayer’s accessory
  - 27. You get one at the beach
  - 28. U.S. founding father
  - 30. W. Australia indigenous people
  - 31. Amounts of time
  - 33. Put on the shelf
- CLUES DOWN**

  - 1. Midway between northeast and east
  - 2. Partner to cheese
  - 3. One from Utah
  - 4. A way to move
  - 5. Playing cards
  - 6. Baseball stat
  - 7. Long river in western Asia
  - 8. Grandmothers
  - 9. Entertainment legend Sullivan
  - 10. Steam bath room
  - 11. One who kills
  - 13. Food
  - 15. Swiss river
  - 17. Fleet
  - 18. Taxi
  - 21. Working class
  - 23. More (Spanish)
  - 24. High schoolers’ test
  - 27. Large heavily built
- 35. Russian dynasty member
  - 37. City along the Elbe River
  - 38. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf
  - 40. Actor Damon
  - 41. \_\_\_ King Cole, musician
  - 42. Company that rings receipts
  - 44. Scatter
  - 45. Basics
  - 48. Part of a door
  - 50. Indicates silence
  - 52. Moved quickly on foot
  - 53. Monetary units
  - 55. A place to crash
  - 56. Many subconsciouses
  - 57. Group of countries
  - 58. About line of latitude
  - 63. Female follower of Bacchus
  - 65. A dentist can treat it
  - 66. Dull brown fabrics
- 67. Int’l nonprofit
  - goat antelope
  - 29. Murdered in his bathtub
  - 32. Tease good-naturedly
  - 34. Morsel
  - 35. Cause persistent resentment
  - 36. A radioactive element
  - 39. Perform in a play
  - 40. Witty remark: Bon \_\_\_
  - 43. A great place to kayak
  - 44. Conclude by reasoning
  - 46. In an unfavorable way
  - 47. Complex of nerve tissues (abbr.)
  - 49. Machine for making paper
  - 51. Feline
  - 54. Yugo’s hatchback
  - 59. Check
  - 60. Press against lightly
  - 61. Wind-pollinated plants
  - 62. \_\_\_compoop
  - 64. Commercial

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13



## GUEST COLUMN

### Sen. Gomez speaks after Oversight Hearing on David Almond

"I want to again offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of David Almond. While COVID-19 has added complexities to everything we do, it is not an excuse for the death of a child – David Almond deserved better and the entire system failed him and his two brothers, Michael and Noah. That was made abundantly clear in today's testimony. How many more times will we have to learn of the loss of another young life, and how many more subsequent Oversight Hearings will have to be held before we make the much needed changes? It is this Committee's responsibility to act intentionally and to get the right answers to figure out what steps we should take next, so that in two years there is not another Bella Bond, Jeremiah Oliver, or David Almond. We must make sure that the legislature's actions have lasting and impactful change, and are not an impulsive reaction so that these tragedies stop. We must also frame our response to include the different barriers and systemic issues BIPOC communities in our state face. Today was the start of continued constructive conversations between the legislature and the agencies that testified. I would like to thank Co-Chair Finn for his partnership in this endeavor, the Committee members for participating in this marathon-length hearing, the agencies legislative panels for offering thoughtful and inform."

MA Sen. Adam Gomez,  
May 4

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Superintendent thanks employees

"During the course of these eight days, there is National Principal Day, National Teacher Appreciation Week, School Lunch Hero Day and Nurses Day. I'd like to extend an appreciation to all of our dedicated employees. Not just those specific groups; all of them."

Lynn Clark,  
Chicopee Public Schools  
Superintendent,



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## GUEST COLUMN

### What to do when someone has a stroke

By Keith J. O'Connor,  
Senior Public Affairs Specialist,  
Baystate Medical Center.

When you want to call an ambulance to help someone who appears to be having a heart attack or a stroke, what's the first thing he or she usually tells you?

"No, I think it's probably nothing and I'll be better in a few moments."

As part of National Stroke Awareness Month, Stephanie Winslow, RN, BSN and Stroke Coordinator of the Stroke Program at Baystate Medical Center, offered the following advice for anyone in the aforementioned situation.

"Don't listen to them and don't waste time [waiting] for the symptoms to go away," said Winslow. "A stroke is a serious medical emergency, and you need to call 911 right away. EMTs can begin life-saving treatment on the way to a designated stroke center found at Baystate, which is especially equipped with a stroke team to meet the patient upon arrival at the hospital."

Winslow added that, "Every second that passes without treatment results in the death of more brain cells, resulting in greater permanent brain damage."

Public knowledge of stroke symptoms is poor, and that is why it is so important to be able to spot the signs of a stroke and know what to do to possibly save a person's life and prevent long-term disability.

"We are trying to educate the community about the acronym BEFAST, which helps to identify the signs and symptoms of stroke and, at the same, time admonishes you to 'be fast' and not wait to get help. B stands for balance, E is for eyes, F means face, A identifies arm, S stands for speech and T means time is of the essence," said Winslow.

Further translating the acronym BEFAST into signs and symptoms, Balance means a sudden loss of balance, Eyes mean a loss of vision in one or both eyes, Face means uneven like a crooked smile or numbness, Arm (or leg, too) means it is hanging down and can't be held up straight, Speech means it

may be slurred or the person may have trouble speaking or seem confused about what you are saying or they are talking nonsense and Time is calling 9-1-1 immediately.

"You also do not want to give the person anything to eat or drink for fear of choking if they are having trouble swallowing. Also, do not give them any medications, especially aspirin, because if they are suffering a brain bleed the aspirin could put them at greater risk," Winslow said.

Additional "do's and don'ts" if someone is having a stroke include:

Do note the time when you first noticed the person's stroke symptoms. Even if the symptoms started before you began to assist them, it is helpful information for doctors to determine the appropriate treatment from administering clot-busting drugs to performing a thrombectomy to remove the clot.

Do check to see if the person is breathing or has a pulse and perform CPR if needed. Ask the 9-1-1 operator for guidance if you don't know how to administer the procedure.

Do have the person lie on their side with their head elevated to promote blood flow to the brain, but do not move them if they have fallen. Keep the person comfortable by loosening restrictive clothing that might deter breathing and keep them warm with a blanket if available.

Don't let the person convince you that if they fall asleep and wake up everything will be okay.

Winslow also emphasized the importance of remaining calm in what can be a very scary moment for someone to come upon a loved one, friend or stranger, who may not be responding to you.

"Remain with the person to comfort them and assure them that help is on the way. Continue to monitor their symptoms and let the paramedics know of any changes since you arrived on the scene. And, if they are verbal, attempt to get any information possible in advance for the paramedics such as allergies, medications they are taking, and any chronic medical conditions they may have," said Winslow.



## Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, per-

sonal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

Send letters to: *The Chicopee Register*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069 or email [chicopeeregister@turley.com](mailto:chicopeeregister@turley.com).

The deadline for submissions is Friday at noon.

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*The Chicopee Register* welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to [chicopeeregister@turley.com](mailto:chicopeeregister@turley.com) or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

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# Horace Smith Fund awards \$297,000 to area students

WESTFIELD – The Horace Smith Fund awarded 20 Walter S. Barr Scholarships, with 16 going to graduating high school seniors and four to students currently attending college.

This year’s local scholarship recipients, who are graduating seniors, are from the following high schools:

Chicopee High School: Kamila L. Soja

Commerce Honors Academy: Seemalata Nepal

Hampden Charter Science Academy: Samantha Josephs

This year’s local scholarship recipi-

ents, who are currently attending college, are:

Elms College: Aimee Ludwin (GED)

The William R. Rooney Award will be granted to one high school candidate who has received special needs services. Additionally, three Walter S. Barr Fellowships will be granted to students enrolled in full-time graduate degree programs. Providing that students maintain at least a B average in college, each scholarship provides a total of \$12,000 over four years, and each fellowship provides \$15,000 over three years. Therefore, The Horace Smith Fund is happy to be able to grant a total award of

\$297,000 to area students this year.

Students were selected on a variety of criteria, including their test scores, class rank, extra-curricular activities, and a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance. Applications for next year’s awards will be available September 15 on-line at [www.HoraceSmithFund.org](http://www.HoraceSmithFund.org) or by calling 413-739-4222.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith. He and Daniel Wesson were the founders of Smith & Wesson, located in Springfield.

Smith’s will provided that the residual of his estate, after several bequests to relatives and institutions, was to be used for public purposes at the discretion of his executors. They decided that it should be used to help deserving students finance their education.

The Walter S. Barr Scholarships and Fellowships are named for a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950. The William R. Rooney Award is named for a past Executive Director with a desire to assist special needs students. All recipients must be residents of Hampden County.

## Outstanding Chicopee students

CHICOPEE – Marc Bernard has been an outstanding student since the beginning of the year. He has faced challenges between remote learning and transitioning back to school but never let those challenges knock him down. Marc is willing to participate in all classes as well as outside of the classroom with extra-curriculars. He is polite and always says hi to his teachers whenever he passes them.

Ella Florence is an amazing student-athlete. She is a member of the Varsity Basketball team and the Unified Basketball team. Ella is a member of Best Buddies and Student Council. Ella strongly advocates for the inclusion of everyone in the school events. She keeps her grades up, and always is willing to help out others. Ella is highly motivated with her high school education and is already planning for her future education. Ella is polite and respectful to the people she encounters.

Bryana Figueroa is a student who is

invested in her work and has shown characteristics of a mature, lifelong learner. Bryana thinks critically and expresses higher-order thinking in her assignments. She applies new concepts to real-life scenarios immediately, she asks intelligent questions, and she recalls information in a natural way. Bryana is a pleasure to have in class and shows promise for her future.

Nicholas De Pinho is an amazing student who embodies inclusion of all students. He goes out of his way to make sure all students feel included, especially at lunchtime. He is a model of kindness and supports others in need. Nicholas is a superstar in every sense of the word, but it is his demeanor that makes him stand apart from his peers, as he is one of the nicest and most humble people. Nicholas has earned high honors throughout high school and during this remote learning, Nicholas has excelled while participating in Cross Country and Indoor track.

## CEA gets charitable while supporting local businesses

Representatives of the Chicopee Education Association, the local union for the educators of the Chicopee Public Schools, including school teachers, education support professionals, office staff, Vice Principals and District Content Supervisors, counselors, specialists, librarians, SPED educators and coordinators, speech pathologists, physical and occupational therapists and so many more, went on a recent shopping spree. It was our intention to support local businesses as well as the Chicopee Public School employee and student families, particularly during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Our organization realizes the stress placed on our local businesses due to the dynamics of COVID-19. As our community has restricted activities outside the home, reduced store occupancy and suffered job losses, we are taking action to show Chicopee our support; knowing we are all in this together.

Our local union applied for, and received, a grant from the Massachusetts

Teachers Association based on our proposal to spend our award for gift cards to buy food, groceries and other necessities at Chicopee area businesses. We then gave these gift cards to our employee and student families hard hit during this pandemic.

Student food insecurities increased during the months of remote learning, even as free breakfast, lunch and after-school snack programs shifted models to allow for food pickups. Student families were also impacted when family members lost employment, suffered the virus or faced long periods of quarantine and recovery. Some of our own CEA members also found themselves in hardship.


With this grant, the CEA gave back to the many businesses, who have been so helpful to our CEA members in the past, and provided some relief to the dire financial situations too many of our school families have suffered in the last year.

Laura Demakis, President, Chicopee Education Association

Photo from Spring 2019

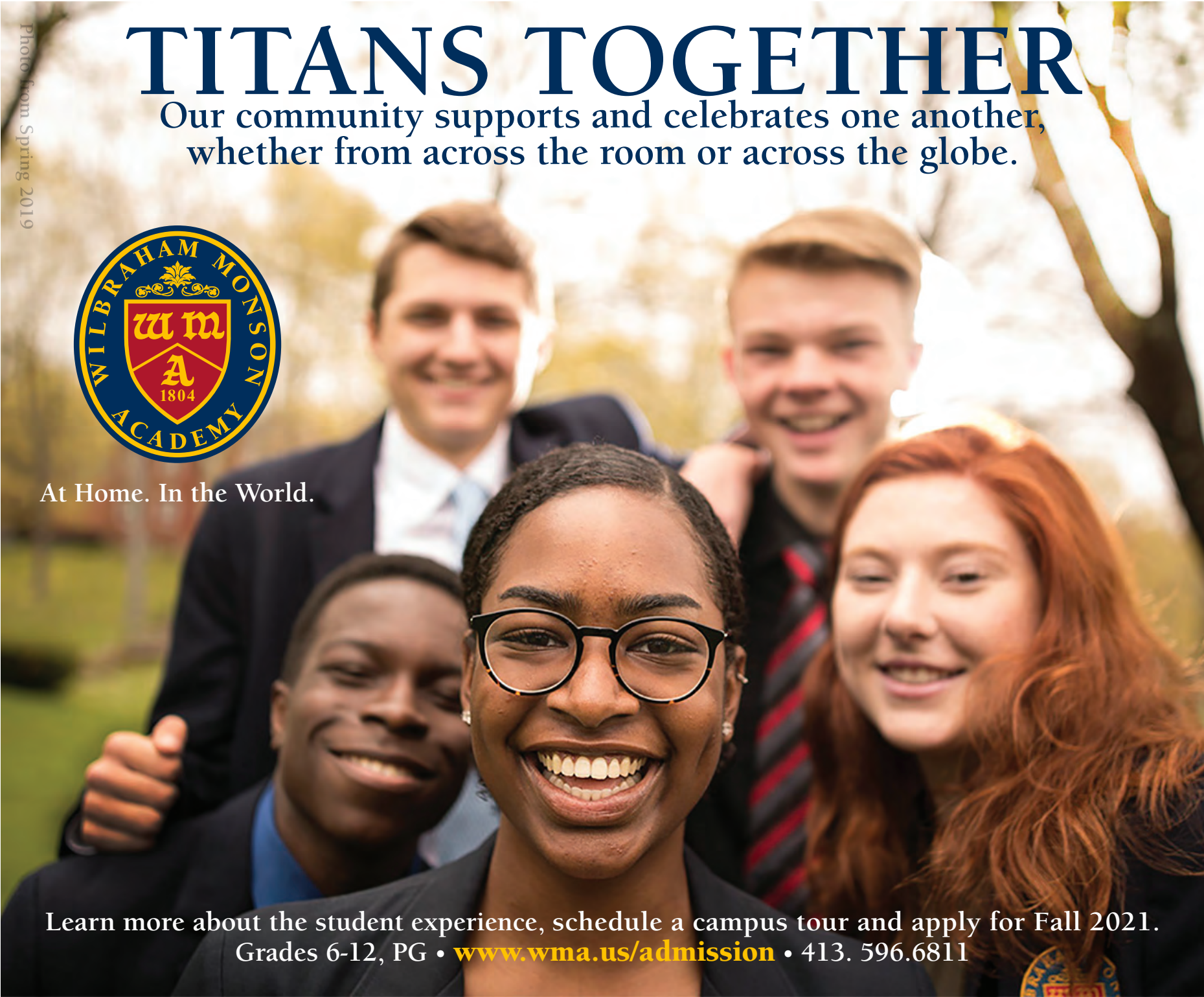
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# IN THE CITY

**MAX** from page 1

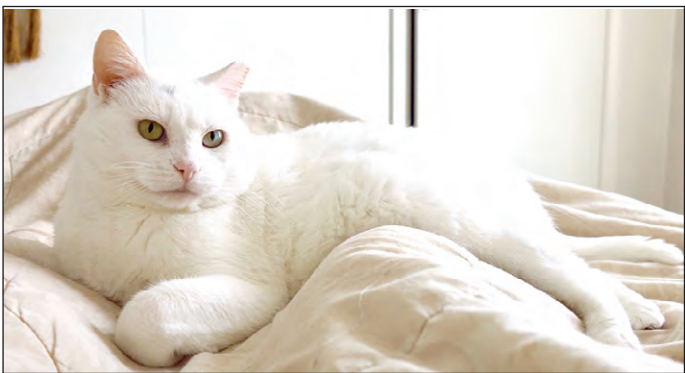
dogs. I had my first cat in 1984, when I was 31-years-old, and have had cats ever since. He's like a dog. He follows me everywhere I go. He'll be sleeping in his chair in the living room, I'll get up and go in the bedroom, and he'll follow me right in."

Over the past 15 months, Maxwell has become an ambassador for the Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center in Springfield on Cottage St. The center is dedicated to helping animals in Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke.

Together, Pandoli and Maxwell have raised thousands of dollars for TJO, over the course of multiple fundraisers. A recent t-shirt drive, featuring an image of Maxwell, was a major success.

"It was the second one that we had. We actually broke our record, so to speak, from the previous one. We raised almost \$1,400, and that actually [began on] the one-year anniversary of finding Maxwell," said Pandoli.

TJO provides animal control services in three cities. The center's animal control officers respond routinely to service calls between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.; emergency response for ill, injured or aggressive ani-



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY BOB PANDOLI

Maxwell Edison was once a feral cat. After being rescued, his Facebook page has nearly reached 2,000 followers.

mals is available around the clock.

One can adopt a kitten under 12 months old from TJO for \$150; adult cats cost \$90. Puppies under 12 months of age can be adopted for \$300, while dogs older than a year cost \$250.

"From the beginning, Maxwell's page has been all about TJO. It's all about raising awareness of feral and homeless cats within our community and what we can do to help and how unbelievable TJO's been and the things they do. I can't say enough good things about them," said Pandoli.



Chicopee resident Bob Pandoli rescued feral cat Maxwell Edison in February of 2020. The decision had a positive impact on his life that he never would have predicted.

All animals available for adoption from TJO have received vaccinations appropriate to their age, are sprayed/neutered and have a microchip implant. More information can be found at [tjoconnoradoptioncenter.com](http://tjoconnoradoptioncenter.com).

Moving forward, Pandoli expects to embark on a variety of new fundraisers. Residents could soon see Maxwell's image on a hoodie or, maybe, even a coffee cup.

Adopting Maxwell has had a positive impact on Pandoli's life that he could never have imagined. He assured Maxwell's

passionate followers that the Facebook page will continue to function for the foreseeable future.

"I always joke that it took Max off the street and keeps me off the street as well; doing all these Max things. It's pretty amazing that people are so faithful in terms of following," said Pandoli. "In a million years, I never thought Maxwell's page would still be going after 15 months and have close to 2,000 followers and have people so faithful to the page."

*Dalton Zbierski is an Editor and can be reached at [dzbierski@turley.com](mailto:dzbierski@turley.com).*

**VACCINATIONS** from page 1

idents were fully-vaccinated.

"You're looking at a population that's only half-vaccinated. It worries me. Especially, with these [COVID-19] variants coming," said Vieau.

From April 26 until April 30, the city hosted a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the RiverMills Senior Center at 5 W Main St. with assistance from Holyoke Health Center.

The widespread availability of vac-

cines, available at local businesses such as Walmart, Walgreens, CVS and Stop & Shop, forced the clinic on W Main Street to close after one week.

"HHC and the city of Chicopee did a full week, and we feel that the demand for that center isn't what it would have been so they felt the need to pull back a little bit. We felt we fulfilled the requirement on our waiting list and our employees and our teachers. They'll be back in several weeks for the second doses," said Vieau.

The regional vaccination clinic at the

Castle of Knights at 1599 Memorial Dr. was open multiple days this past week, but a set schedule has yet to be determined. The clinic serves residents of Chicopee, Granby, Holyoke and South Hadley and will open as is needed.

A May 12 report from the Mayor's Office stated that the clinic will likely be closed next week and reopen on May 27.

Chicopee partnered again with HHC, and also Tufts and Harvard Pilgrim Health, to launch the Mobile Vaccine Clinic, a bus that was parked outside of the Chicopee Boys & Girls Club at 580 Meadow St. on May 13 and 14.

"We're hoping that the Boys & Girls Club will be a spot that gets a lot of activity," said Vieau. "If the demands there, we'll be there."

Vieau is optimistic that the bus will appeal to residents, who do not want to travel across or outside of the city to be vaccinated. Vieau strongly urges residents to get vaccinated if they are able to do so.

"At the end of the day, the goal is to get people vaccinated, and I think we can get back to all the fun things we enjoy," said Vieau.

Free COVID-19 testing continues to occur on Monday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. until noon on the upper level of the RiverMills Center. Any individual, who lives or works in Chicopee, is eligible to be tested.

"We are not going to turn someone away who needs a test," said Vieau.

*Dalton Zbierski is an Editor and can be reached at [dzbierski@turley.com](mailto:dzbierski@turley.com).*

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# Sports

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## Colts hold off comeback attempt by Orioles



PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM  
Hunter Davis makes a jumping catch.

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

CHICOPEE — The Chicopee Comp boys lacrosse team pretty much controlled the first 28 minutes of the season opening match versus Valley League rival Belchertown.

The Orioles, who trailed, 8-0, made a comeback in the middle of the third quarter slicing the deficit to 8-5.

The Colts regained the momentum during the fourth quarter by scoring five unanswered goals en route to a 13-5 victory before a large gathering at Mitchell Kuzdzal Field, last Thursday night.

“We’re a very young and inexperienced team this year, but we had a lot of guys step up in tonight’s game,” said Comp head coach Matt Smith. “Winning our first game of the season should give us a lot more confidence.”

The Colts now have a 7-0 record against the Orioles since the start of the 2016 regular season.

“Belchertown is a well-coached team and they’ve always played well against us,” said Smith, who’s entering his fourth season as the Colts head coach. “They’re a league rival, so it’s a huge win for us.”

The Orioles swept the sea-

See **COLTS** page 11



Jayden Tolliver starts a run for the goal.



Mason Whitehead keeps the ball near his body as he heads into the Oriole end.



Zach Canavan heads up the field after catching a pass.



Goalie Chase Presz makes a pass out of his circle.

## Pioneers return to action

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW — When Maxi Viera first joined the Western Mass. Pioneers back in 2012, he knew very little about the history of the club and about historic Lusitano Stadium.

Viera, who’s originally from Montevideo, Uruguay, is one of the Pioneers veteran players on this year’s team. He likes to tell the younger players how special it is to wear a Pioneers uniform and what it means to play home matches at the only soccer specific stadium in New England.

“Playing soccer matches at this stadium is very special because of the history,” Viera said. “It’s also very important for us to have a successful season every year because we’re representing both the club and this community.”

The Pioneers, who finished in first place in the Northeast Division standings with an 11-0-3 mark, qualified for the USL League Two playoffs in 2019. They kicked off the 2021 campaign by posting a 3-0 shutout win over Fall River FC in a friendly match held under the bright lights at Lusitano Stadium, last Friday night.



PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM

Maxi Viera makes a dodge to keep the ball from being taken away.

“The good thing about tonight’s match is that I had the opportunity to watch 20 players play prior to our first regular season match,” said Pioneer’s head coach Federico Molinari. “We do have a bunch of returning players and a couple of newcomers. We just want to be a competitive team again this year.”

Because of the COVID-19 protocols, no spectators could attend last Friday’s friendly match. The 2020 soccer season was also canceled due to the pandemic.

“It was very strange not playing any matches for the Pioneers last year, especially following a very successful 2019 season,” Viera said. “We really want to perform well this season and make the playoffs again.”

What makes attending matches at Lusitano Stadium so special for the Pioneers faithful supporters is the atmosphere.

“It reminds me a lot of that soccer clubs that I played for back in Uruguay,” Viera added.

See **PIONEERS** page 11

## Kruczek picks up win at Star Speedway



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bryan Kruczek was the winner in the Granite State Pro Stock race last weekend.

WALPOLE, N.H. -- Bryan Kruczek passed the entire field -- at least twice -- en route to his first career Granite State Pro Stock Series win at Star Speedway on Saturday, May 8. Kruczek, who was fastest in time trials and won his heat race, started seventh -- but had to go to the rear on at least two different occasions. The Bobby Webber Racing driver didn’t let that slow him down, as he took the Vynorius No. 19 into Victory Lane in the third GSPSS race of the season, the Hedges Excavating 100. “I’m out of breath,” Kruczek said, climbing from the

car. “I had to pass a lot of cars out there. I can’t thank all of my guys enough, my guys are second to none. Bobby Webber lets me come out here and tells me to hand him the steering wheel or the trophy. We have some awesome sponsors.”

Angelo Belsito and Joey Pole started on the front row -- with Belisto taking the early advantage looking for his second straight win, and former series champion Devin O’Connell mounting an early charge to the lead with 33 laps complete. Pole

See **RACING** page 11





## Valley Wheel action opens

SUFFIELD, Conn. – The Valley Wheel Over-28 Baseball League, like many other leagues in 2020, lost its season last year due to the pandemic. Players in the league participated in their first action in almost two years last Sunday, May 2. The league features six teams playing most of its games on Sunday afternoons. The league did have its traditional Saturday matinee for Mother's Day weekend this past week.

Twins pitcher Dan Benoit fires to the plate.

Angels third baseman Mike Dean, of Wilbraham, fields a grounder.



PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY [WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM](http://WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM)

Justin Morin makes a throw to first.

## Premier Lacrosse League training camp to be held at Gillette

FOXBOROUGH – The Premier Lacrosse League (PLL) powered by Ticketmaster announced today it will be holding their 2021 Training Camp at Gillette Stadium from May 28 through June 3, 2021 leading up to their Week 1 matchups at Gillette Stadium.

"There's not a venue as closely connected to lacrosse, with world-class facilities and amenities like Gillette Stadium and One Patriot Place," says co-founder and CEO, Mike Rabil. "With our opening weekend of games slated for June 4th, our athletes will receive the best care while preparing for the start of the season on location."

During this time, PLL players will take part in official team practices, scrim-

mages, preseason workouts, film sessions, and educational workshops with their coaches ahead of their regular season debuts. Training Camp will be closed to the public, but tickets are still available for Opening Weekend at Ticketmaster.com.

"We look forward to hosting the PLL's Training Camp at Gillette Stadium for the first time this spring, in addition to hosting the league's Opening Weekend," said Kraft Group President-International Dan Kraft, who was a collegiate lacrosse goalie for Tufts University in the 1980s and served on the executive Board of the 2018 Federation of International Lacrosse's World Championships Host Committee. "Hosting training camp is another important step in our strong re-

lationship with the PLL and we cannot wait to welcome the nation's best lacrosse players, including former Patriot Chris Hogan, back to Gillette Stadium. While training camp will be closed to the public, we are excited to welcome fans to Gillette Stadium June 4 through June 6 to enjoy five riveting PLL matchups all weekend long."

As part of PLL's Training Camp, pre-season exhibition games will be hosted at Veterans Memorial Stadium on June 1. More information on schedule and tickets for pre-season exhibition games forthcoming.

The PLL season will begin at Gillette Stadium for the second time, getting underway with a primetime matchup be-

tween Cannons LC and Redwoods LC under the lights on Friday, June 4. Saturday's slate includes a championship rematch between Whipsnakes LC and Chaos LC, followed by Archers LC taking on Atlas LC. On Sunday afternoon, Cannons LC will return to the field against Waterdogs LC, and the weekend will be capped off with a matchup between Chrome LC and Redwoods LC.

The entire 2021 PLL season will be viewable on the NBCU family of networks, with all games available to stream live and on-demand on Peacock. The 2021 season will feature more than half of its games on NBC and NBCSN, with a full broadcast schedule to be announced at a later date.

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COLTS from page 9

son series in 2015.

Just like every other high school boys' lacrosse team in Massachusetts, the Orioles and the Colts didn't play any matches last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both teams finished the 2019 regular season with 13-5 records.

Comp lost to Westfield in a first round match of the Central/Western Mass. Division 2 tournament.

Belchertown lost to Nipmuc in a first round match of the Central/Western Mass. Division 3 tournament.

Three of the Orioles seniors listed on this year's roster are planning to play lacrosse at the collegiate level next year.

Cole Irving will be attending the University of New England. Owen Sedlacek is heading to Nazareth College, which is in Rochester, New York. Griffin Weiss will be playing at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky.

Nick St. George also replaced Patrick Nee, who retired following the 2019 season, as the Orioles head coach.

"The players are still getting used to my coaching style and I'm still getting to know them," said St. George, who coached the Belchertown girls' lacrosse team in 2019. "It's a learning process for everybody and we just want to keep improving in every game."

One of the Colts returning varsity players is junior Dylan Seymour, who scored four goals in the season opening victory.

"Dylan is one of our few returning players and he's one of our leaders," Smith said. "He started playing for us as a freshman. He set the tone at the start of the game."

Seymour, who's older brother, Brady, is the first-year boys' lacrosse coach at Granby High School, scored three goals on his first four shot attempts of the match. He netted a pair of unassisted goals, which were sandwiched around another goal assisted by junior David Gi-

rouard, who also scored four goals in the first meeting of the regular season against Belchertown.

Two more goals by senior's Jacob Girouard and Hunter Davis gave the home team a 5-0 advantage entering the second stanza.

David Girouard scored his first goal of the contest with 2:52 remaining in the opening half giving the Colts a 6-0 half-time advantage.

The Colts built an 8-0 lead four minutes into the third quarter following another goal by David Girouard, which was assisted by Seymour, and an unassisted goal by senior Brennan Fields.

With 7:26 left in the third quarter, the Orioles ended the shutout hopes of Comp senior goalie Chase Presz (11 saves) with an unassisted goal by Sedlacek.

The Orioles comeback continued with two more unassisted goals by sophomore Brady Moreau and senior Jaden Wise.

"We did play a lot better in the

third quarter," St. George said. "We had a lot of momentum and cut the deficit down to 8-5. We also had several more scoring opportunities, but we just didn't capitalize on them. They regained the momentum again in the fourth quarter."

At that point, Smith decided to call a time-out.

"I was a little bit nervous when they started to comeback against us," Smith said. "I just called a time-out and tried to settle things down a little bit."

With less than two minutes remaining in the third quarter, Weiss delivered a pass to Wise, who scored his second goal making the score 8-4. Then Wise forced a turnover leading to another goal by Sedlacek.

The visitors couldn't get any closer than three goals the rest of the way.

David Girouard scored two more goals during the final quarter. The Colts other three fourth quarter goals were by Seymour, Jacob Girouard, and junior Daniel Stefanik.

PIONEERS from page 9

"The soccer fans here have a lot of passion for the sport. It's one of the reasons why we have so many international players on our team. When they come here and it feels like home to them, which is very special."

The Pioneers were scheduled to open the regular season with a road match against the Boston Bolts on Tuesday night. They're also slated to play another road match against FC Malaga City, who's a new team in the Northeast Division on Saturday night before hosting the Seacoast United Phantoms in the home opener on May 21.

The Pioneers officials are hoping a few fans will be allowed to attend the first home match of the regular season.

For more information about how to purchase tickets online please visit [wm-pioneers.com](http://wm-pioneers.com).

Another returning player this season is Blake Mullen, who's the Pioneers starting goalkeeper. He allowed a total of seven goals during the 2019 regular season.

"Whenever you start a soccer team, you normally begin at the back (goalkeeper) and work forward," said Viera, who's also the girls' varsity soccer coach at Ludlow High School. "Blake had an amazing season for us two years ago. It gives you a lot of confidence having a talented goalie

like him back there. We're hoping he has another great season this year."

Mullen, of Manchester, Conn., played soccer at St. Joseph's College in Maine. That's where he first met Molinari.

"I was playing for a National Premiere Soccer League team in Maine and Federico found me," Mullen said. "I tried out for the team and I was a backup goalie my first year playing here. It was a step up for me and I learned a lot that season. Federico is an outstanding coach. I've also learned a lot from Jon Voight, who's our goalie coach."

Mullen became the Pioneers starter in 2019 and he was the USL League Two Golden Glove winner that season.

"It's a very special award to me, but I couldn't have done it without the help of my defense," he said. "We had a great defense, and it was a special season for us."

The Pioneers only returning defender is Federico Gutierrez.

Mullen has enjoyed playing home matches at Lusitano Stadium.

"It's awesome when all of the fans are here supporting us," Mullen said. "It pushes us to play a little bit harder because whenever you do lose a game at this stadium, the fans are disappointed. The atmosphere is always great following a victory."

Mullen was replaced by Robert Montanaro in the middle of the second half.

Another returning player is Connor Hicks, who lives in Monson.

"I was mainly a practice player in 2019, but I did get to play in a playoff game," said Hicks, a member of the AIC men's soccer team. "It was just an awesome experience for me."

When Hicks was younger, he attended a lot of the Pioneers games at the stadium.

"I remember coming to the Pioneers games when they played on a grass field," Hicks said. "It's now a turf field, but it's

one of the best stadiums I've ever played soccer at. I really enjoy playing soccer for this team. I know that I'll have to work very hard at practice to get some playing time this year."

One of the Pioneers newcomers is Gabriel Ganzer, who is from Brazil and is living in Chicopee. He scored a goal and added an assist during the first half against Fall River.

Guillermo Deal, who's a returning player, and newcomer Andrew Barrowman scored the Pioneers other two goals.

RACING from page 9

took the lead on a restart with 58 laps to go, but couldn't hold back the charges of Kruczek in the late laps.

Kruczek's day included contact and a spin by Jacob Dore, which sent both to the rear, and contact and a spin with Evan Beaulieu, which sent both to the rear. He pitted multiple times to the attention of his Bobby Webber Racing crew, but the car was right at the end. He passed Pole for the top spot with 24 laps to go -- however, a caution late gave Pole on last chance.

Pole edged out for the lead on the restart, crossing the line out front at lap 94 -- but slight contact a few laps later sent him backwards, and eventually spinning down the frontstretch, ending his day early. Kruczek held off a final charge from Josh King over the final laps to seal the victory.

King was second, followed by Dore, Belsito and Derek Gluchacki. Tyler Tomassi was sixth, while Gabe Brown, Beaulieu, O'Connell and Kevin Casper finished the top-10.

The Granite State Pro Stock Series returns to the track on Sunday, May 30, as part of a Memorial Day weekend special at Claremont Motorsports Park. For more information on the Granite State Pro Stock Series, visit [gspss.net](http://gspss.net) and follow the series on social media.

**The Finish:**  
Bryan Kruczek  
Josh King  
Jacob Dore  
Angelo Belsito  
Derek Gluchacki  
Tyler Tomassi  
Gabe Brown  
Evan Beaulieu  
Devin O'Connell  
Kevin Casper  
Bobby Cabral  
Bill Helliwell  
Joey Pole  
Bobby Pelland  
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# PUBLIC NOTICES

## CHICOPEE CITY COUNCIL ZONING COMMITTEE LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing **Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 6:30 PM\*** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, 17 Springfield St., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Zone Change application from Business A to Residential A for 19,963 square feet of property located at 6 Knapp St. for the purpose of a subdivision. Applicant – Alston Graham, 91 Ames Road, Hampden, MA 01036.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

**\*COVID-19:** Pursuant to the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL c. 30A due to the novel Coronavirus outbreak, the May 27, 2021 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. As required, alternative public access to this hearing shall be provided in the following manner: The hearing will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Anyone wishing to participate either in person in the Chambers or remotely shall, provide notice to the Office of the City Council by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov) by May 25, 2021, 2021. Those giving such notice will need to identify the public hearing and provide their name, address and contact phone number to minimize the potential for zoom bombing of the meeting and if attending in person to be screened as required by the City of Chicopee.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>). You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 05/07, 05/14/2021

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Special Permit application under section 275-52 (B) (3) for the purpose of a garage that is not accessory to a primary structure to allow subdivision of the property by ANR to create new building lot on Moore St. and leave existing home on a second lot on 61 Van Horn St. located at 61 Van Horn St. Applicant – David McGeary, 87 Blueberry Hill Rd., Longmeadow, MA 01006.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

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Special Permit application under 275-58 (C) (4) for the purpose of all alcohol beverage license located at 66 Cabot St. Applicant – Orlando Roberts, 66 Cabot St., Chicopee, MA 01013.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

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website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>). You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 05/07, 05/14/2021

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Special Permit application under 275-72 for the purpose of establishment of an adult-use marijuana establishment with the provisions of MGL Chapter 94G, "Regulation of the Use and Distribution of Marijuana Not Medically Prescribed" located at 77 Champion Dr. with one (1) waiver request: Waiver #1 Reduction in the planted vegetated buffer requirement from 100' to +/- 91.5' along the southern property boundary and from 100' to 0' along the western boundary to accommodate existing stormwater management infrastructure. Applicant - Mass Alternative Care, Inc., Kevin Collins, 1247 East Main St., Chicopee, MA 01020.

Special Permit application under section 275-70 for the purpose of establishment of a medical marijuana facility in accordance with the Acts of 2012, Chapter 369, entitled "An act for the Humanitarian Use of Marijuana" with four (4) waiver requests located at 77 Champion Dr.: (1) Waiver #1 for an additional 6643 square feet of gross floor area beyond the 50,000 square feet as noted in the zoning ordinance. (2) Waiver #2 for 24/7 operations from the restricted hours of 8:00 pm to 8 am per the zoning ordinance. (3) Waiver #3 to reduce the residential setback from 300 feet to +/- 100 feet. (4) Waiver #4 for compliance with the MA Department of Public Health signage requirements. Applicant- Mass Alternative Care, Inc., Kevin Collins, 1247 East Main St., Chicopee, MA 01020.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

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Chicopee.

The petition and materials related to this proposal are on file in the Office of the City Council, Chicopee City Hall, 274 Front Street, (plans and applications are also available on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>). You may also call (413) 594-1435 or email [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov). 05/07, 05/14/2021

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**Ordinance Amendment -** Delete in its entirety Chapter 275-66 A and insert revised Chapter 275-66A Burnett Road. Full text available in the Office of the City Council. Applicant: Ward 6 Councilor Derek Dobosz, City Council Office, City Hall Annex, 274 Front St., Chicopee, MA 01013.

**\*COVID-19:** Pursuant to the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL c. 30A due to the novel Coronavirus outbreak, the May 27, 2021 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. As required, alternative public access to this hearing shall be provided in the following manner: The hearing will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Anyone wishing to participate either in person in the Chambers or remotely shall, provide notice to the Office of the City Council by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov) by May 25, 2021, 2021. Those giving such notice will need to identify the public hearing and provide their name, address and contact phone number to minimize the potential for zoom bombing of the meeting and if attending in person to be screened as required by the City of Chicopee.

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The Zoning Committee of the Chicopee City Council will hold a public hearing **Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 6:30 PM\*** in the Auditorium, 3rd floor, City Hall, 17 Springfield St., Chicopee, MA 01013 to discuss the following:

Special Permit application under 275-40 (G) for the purpose of reduction in required number of parking spaces from 18 to 16 spaces located at 675 Fuller Road. Applicant - Mike Laser Enterprises, LLC, c/o David LaVenture, 428 East Street, Chicopee, MA 01020.

The plans/application can be viewed on the City Council website <https://www.chicopeema.gov/880/Pending-Applications>

**\*COVID-19:** Pursuant

to the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL c. 30A due to the novel Coronavirus outbreak, the May 27, 2021 Zoning Committee hearing shall be available to the public via zoom and in person. As required, alternative public access to this hearing shall be provided in the following manner: The hearing will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Anyone wishing to participate either in person in the Chambers or remotely shall, provide notice to the Office of the City Council by calling (413) 594-1435 M-F 8:30 AM – 5 PM or by email at [aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov](mailto:aczarniecki@chicopeema.gov) by May 25, 2021, 2021. Those giving such notice will need to identify the public hearing and provide their name, address and contact phone number to minimize the potential for zoom bombing of the meeting and if attending in person to be screened as required by the City of Chicopee.

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## INVITATION FOR BID - CEL BID #21-0492

Chicopee Electric Light (CEL) invites bids from qualified bidders for TREE TRIMMING/FORESTRY SERVICES (ANNUAL) as described in BID 21-0492. The successful bidder will be awarded a ONE (1) year contract. CEL, at its discretion shall have the option to grant the successful bidder an extension for up to two (2) additional (1) year periods. Evaluation for extension of the contract will be done yearly prior to the end of the contract prior to the end of any contract extension, but in no case shall the contract exceed three (3) years in total. Prices shall remain firm during the contract term and for any extension and the conditions of the contract shall remain the same.

Specifications may be requested from Chicopee Electric Light located at 725 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01020, Monday through Friday 9:00 am until 3:00 pm.

All questions or requests for clarification regarding this BID should be made in writing to the attention of Natalie Colberg with the BID #21-0492 in the subject line.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a certified or cashier's check payable to the order of the Chicopee Electric Light for a sum not less than 5% of the bid price. In lieu of a check, a bid bond may be submitted in an amount not less than 5% of the bid price. Checks, if submitted, will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders after the award of the order.

A payment bond in an amount equal to 50 percent of the total amount of the bid with a surety company qualified to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will be required for the payment under the contract for labor and materials.

All bids for this project are

subject to applicable bidding laws of Massachusetts, including M.G.L. c. 149, §§ 44A-H and M.G.L. c. 30, § 39M.

Attention is directed to the minimum wage rates to be paid as determined by the Department of Labor Standards under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 149, §§ 26-27D.

All proposals must be submitted in DUPLICATE form, sealed and marked on the outside "**CEL BID #21-0492**" and be received at the office of Chicopee Electric Light (CEL), Attn., Natalie A. Colberg, 725 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01020 no later than 10:00 am on June 3, 2021 at which time and place they will be publicly opened.

CEL reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive informalities and minor irregularities in bids received, if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the CEL to do so.

Natalie A. Colberg  
Purchasing

05/14/2021

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD21C0070CA  
In the matter of:  
\* Clark  
aka: Richard Clark  
CITATION ON PETITION  
TO CHANGE NAME**

**A Petition to Change Name of Adult** has been filed by **\*Clark, aka: Richard Clark of Chicopee, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

**Richard Michael Clark  
IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/24/2021.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 26, 2021

**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
05/14/2021

## SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES Under G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on **May 14, 2021** at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

**2021 AMIGO WARRIOR**  
VIN: LL0TCKPF3MG000362  
UNKNOWN  
04/30, 05/07, 05/14/2021

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Docket No. HD20P1436PM  
In the matter of:  
Jose Rodriguez  
of Chicopee, MA  
Protected Person/  
Disabled Person /  
Respondent  
CITATION GIVING  
NOTICE OF  
CONSERVATOR'S  
ACCOUNT

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the **First and Final** account(s) of **Alison M Bartlett-O'Donald** of Holyoke, MA as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance.

**You have the right to object to the account(s).** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before **10:00 a.m. on the return date of 06/07/2021.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including the allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds

upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court.

You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
**The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.**

Witness, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: May 05, 2021  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
05/14/2021

**SALE OF  
MOTOR VEHICLES  
Under G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A**

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on **May 21, 2021** at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

1997 Honda Civic  
VIN: 1HGEJ8547VL009492  
Reynaldo Martinez  
400 Papermill Rd  
Westfield, MA 01085

2004 Infiniti I35  
VIN: JNKDA31A04T209457  
Christian Edwards  
341 Hampden St  
Chicopee, MA 01020

2006 Infiniti M35  
VIN: JNKAY01F76M255177  
Tejanae Wilson  
43 Day St 1R  
West Springfield, MA 01089

2007 Toyota Sequoia  
Vin: 5TDZT34AX7S291178  
Terry Alan Black Jr  
50 Kelsey Way  
Palmetto, GA 30268

2008 Jeep Wrangler  
VIN: 1J4FA24128L646909  
Terrance Yates  
8 St Paul St  
Westfield, MA 01085

2009 Hyundai Sonata  
VIN: 5NPET46C79H416147  
Destiny Michelle Mone  
Pressley  
598 Dwight St Apt 508  
Holyoke, MA 01040

2009 Volkswagen Jetta  
VIN: 3VWRZ71K69M017219  
Cody Benane  
7311 Town Brook  
Middletown, CT 06457

2013 Subaru Crpsstrek  
VIN: JF2GPAKXCXD2857543  
David Moran  
133 Richard St  
Hartford, CT 06119

2014 Dodge Charger  
VIN: 2C3CDXBG2EH215326  
Pv Holding  
23-45 87Th St  
East Elmherst, NY 11369  
05/07, 05/14, 05/21/2021

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Docket No. HD16P1769PM  
In the matter of:  
Ella C. Paquette**

**of Easthampton, MA  
Protected Person/  
Disabled Person /  
Respondent  
CITATION GIVING  
NOTICE OF  
CONSERVATOR'S  
ACCOUNT**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the **Fourth** account(s) of **Emily Ann Paquette** of Easthampton, MA as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance.

**You have the right to object to the account(s).** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before **10:00 A.M. on the return date of 05/28/2021.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including the allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court.

You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s)

at no cost to you.  
**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
**The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.**

Witness, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 30, 2021  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
05/14/2021

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Docket No. HD20P1436PM  
In the interests of  
Jose Rodriguez  
Of Chicopee, MA  
RESPONDENT  
Incapacitated Person/  
Protected Person  
CITATION GIVING  
NOTICE OF  
PETITION FOR  
TERMINATION  
OF A GUARDIAN OF AN  
INCAPACITATED  
PERSON**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Alison Bartlett-O'Donald** of Holyoke, MA in the above captioned matter requesting that the court:

Terminate the the Conservatorship of the Respondent.

The petition asks the court to make a determina-

tion that the Guardian and/or Conservator should be allowed to resign; or should be removed for good cause; or that the Guardianship and/or Conservatorship is no longer necessary and therefore should be terminated. The original petition is on file with the court.

**You have the right to object to this proceeding.** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before **10:00 a.m. on the return date of 06/07/2021.** This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
**The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expenses.**

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court

Date: May 05, 2021  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
05/14/2021

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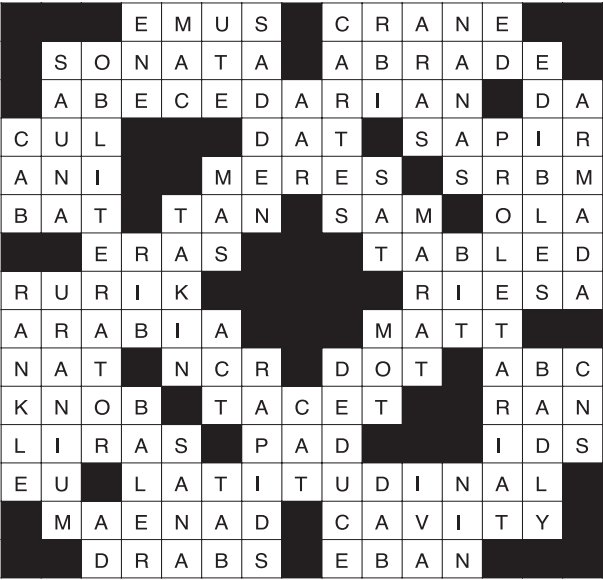
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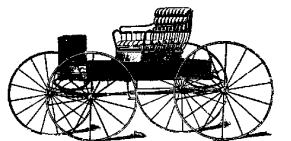
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25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

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STCC student gets degree at age 60

SPRINGFIELD – Heide Blackak had a dream of getting a degree when she decided to enroll at Springfield Technical Community College as a full-time student in her late 50s.

Two years later, at the age of 60, she’s not only getting a degree – she is receiving recognition as one of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education’s “29 Who Shine.” The award recognizes 29 outstanding student graduates from the Commonwealth’s public higher education system.

“I was really overwhelmed to be in that group of young people,” said Agawam resident Blackak, who is one of the oldest recipients in the award’s 10-year history.

Each year, the state honors outstanding students who show promise as future leaders and demonstrate a strong record of academic achievement. The 29 will be honored in an online ceremony on Thursday, May 13, at 2 p.m.

Blackak will earn her degree in liberal arts/general studies with a 4.0 grade point average.

Blackak first took college classes decades ago not long after graduating from high school in Pennsylvania. She received a scholarship to study languages. However, she never finished. She got married and raised two children who are now in their 30s.

“In the back of my mind I always thought I would love to finish school,” Blackak said.

When she decided it was time to go back, she chose STCC because it was af-

fordable and close to home. Washington Monthly rated STCC as Best 2-Year College for Adult Learners. The faculty and staff welcomed her and made the process of enrolling easy. “No one once made me feel uncomfortable by being older. I made many new friends, who I keep in touch with on social media,” she said.

She said her grown sons supported her decision to enroll at STCC, ranked fourth best community college in the United States by Academic Influence. When she got an A in class, she would text a photo of the grade to them.

“They were like, ‘Mom, you’re so smart!’” Blackak said, chuckling. She often punctuates her responses with an infectious laugh.

“My grandchildren are more excited than anyone. They would say, ‘Oh my gosh, you have a 4.0,’ or, ‘You won this award!’ It’s exciting to them, and they would look up and say, ‘If she can do it, then I can do it.’”

Her partner, Paul, provided support and help with homework on Saturday night.

Blackak pursued her degree while working two full-time jobs. She also was caring for her mother, who was receiving cancer treatment. She would read textbooks during lunch breaks and also worked on assignments late at night. On top of her studies and work, she serves as an STCC Student Ambassador and volunteers her time for a number of organizations, including hospice care and the American Red Cross.

She listed her math classes as the



STCC STUDENT PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY STCC  
Heide Blackak recently earned a degree from Springfield Technical Community College at the age of 60.

highlight of her STCC experience, which might come as a surprise to her friends who knew about her math phobia.

“When I went to school, I failed math and had to go to summer school. I didn’t understand the concept of math. I am not a logical thinker, I asked too many questions,” she said.

But the math instructors at STCC supported her and went the extra mile to ensure she would succeed. She said Professor Zahi Haddad “was a phenomenal teacher.”

“If we asked the same question 20

different ways, he took the time to go over it again,” she said.

She took advantage of the resources at STCC, including the supplemental instruction program which consists of student peers enrolled at the college who help in and out of the classroom. She used the free tutoring program at STCC and hired a private tutor.

“I went early, stayed late, did extra credit and never missed a class. I got an A. My very first A in math since I was in sixth grade,” she said.

She thanked algebra instructor, James McDonald, and math professor, Ann-Marie Simao, both of whom helped her accomplish her dream.

“I learned to really love math,” Blackak said. “I thought I was ‘dumb’ in math my whole life. It really prevented me from doing more. You can’t do surgery, build a spaceship or build a bridge if you can’t do math. So I never thought I could do this. After going to STCC, I realized I was really smart in math and I could do anything.”

STCC Academic Counselor Elisabeth Cantor, who taught Blackak in an Introduction to Sociology course, nominated her for the 29 Who Shine award.

Cantor said she was thrilled to learn that Blackak was chosen for the 29 Who Shine award.

“She’s a lovely lady, and it couldn’t have happened to a nicer person,” Cantor said. “And she does shine.”

Interested in applying to STCC? Visit [stcc.edu/apply](http://stcc.edu/apply) or call Admissions at (413) 755-3333.

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